

3.12 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SAFETY

This section describes the public facilities and safety services within the proposed project study area, evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed project on those facilities and services, and proposes measures to mitigate those impacts. Impacts on emergency service providers who would serve the proposed project are assessed in this section.

Public facilities are defined as schools, hospitals, fire protection and emergency services, and police services.¹ The study area for schools includes the area within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor as this is considered the area that would potentially experience impacts. The study area for emergency services includes the area within one mile of the proposed project corridor as this is considered the area that would likely respond to an emergency. Hospitals, however, were identified on a countywide basis. The DEIR discussion of impacts on public parks and recreation facilities is provided in Section 3.10. An examination of public facilities and safety is also in the *Community Impact Assessment* (Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2005) prepared as part of the preliminary planning for the proposed project.

3.12.1 Regulatory Setting

Federal Regulations

Federal Railroad Safety Act

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), pursuant to the Federal Railroad Safety Act, promulgates railroad safety rules governing tracks, locomotives, train cars, braking systems, operating practices, locomotive engineer certification, control of alcohol and drug use, and regulation of transportation of hazardous materials via rail. The Act generally requires the FRA to hold public hearings prior to issuance of a rule, with public notice of, and an opportunity to comment on, the proposed rule.

At-Grade Rail Crossings

The FRA promotes education and enforcement of crossing safety, primarily through Operation Lifesaver, a private organization in 49 states. The FRA also promotes engineering improvements to crossings and sponsors research to improve warning devices and visibility at crossings.

Code of Federal Regulations

The Code of Federal Regulations includes several sets of requirements for railway safety measures and emergency response, including the following:

- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 234, Grade Crossing Signal System Safety;
- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Part 236, Rules, Standards, and Instructions Governing the Installation, Inspection, Maintenance, and Repair of Signal and Train Control Systems, Devices and Appliances;
- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, Subtitle B, Chapter 11, FRA Regulations; and
- *FRA Passenger Train Emergency Preparedness Final Rule*. Section 239.101. Prior to rail start-up, SMART is required to prepare and submit an Emergency Preparedness Plan to the FRA. The Plan must be developed in concert with local emergency responders and submitted to FRA for approval prior to initiation of passenger rail service. See Section 2.9 (Environmental Compliance Measures) for a listing of the Plan requirements.

¹ As noted in the Executive Summary and Section 5.4, SMART has determined that utilities and service systems would not be subject to potentially significant environmental impacts and therefore are eliminated from further evaluation in this DEIR.

Tunnels

Tunnels for the proposed project would comply with the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) NFPA 130: Standard for Fixed Guideway Transit and Passenger Rail Systems.²

State Regulations

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

The CPUC employs federally certified staff inspectors and coordinates with the FRA to ensure that railroads comply with federal railroad safety regulations. The Commission investigates railroad accidents and responds to safety related inquiries made by community officials, the general public and railroad labor organizations. The Commission is an active participant in Operation Lifesaver, an at-grade crossing awareness training program. The CPUC has adopted several General Orders addressing rail safety:

- CPUC General Order No. 72-B, Rules Governing the Construction and Maintenance of Crossings At-Grade of Railroads with Public Streets, Roads and Highways in the State of California;
- CPUC General Order No. 75-C, Regulations Governing the Protection of Crossings At-Grade of Roads, Highways and Streets with Railroads in the State of California;
- CPUC General Order No. 88-A, Rules For Altering Public Railroad-Highway Grade Crossings; and
- CPUC General Order No. 135, Rules Governing the Occupancy of Public Grade Crossings by Railroads.

3.12.2 Environmental Setting

Schools

In Sonoma County there are 40 public school districts, consisting of 171 schools with an enrollment of nearly 73,000 students (Sonoma County Office of Education, 2004). Of the 171 schools, 152 are elementary/high schools, while the remaining schools include continuation schools and charter schools. Sonoma County has three colleges/universities: Empire College, Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University.

Thirty-one of these schools are located within ½ mile of the proposed project corridor. Of these, the following three schools are located within 500 feet of the proposed project: Sonoma Country Day School in Santa Rosa, Windsor Christian Academy in Windsor and Foss Creek Elementary School in Healdsburg.

Marin County has 19 public school districts, with a total of 77 schools (Marin County Office of Education, 2004). Of the 77 public schools, 44 are elementary schools (grades K – 8), 11 are middle/junior high schools (grades 6-8) and eight are high schools (grades 9-12), with an enrollment of nearly 28,600 students in 2002-2003. The remaining 14 public schools include continuation schools (two), alternative education/independent study (eight), and charter schools (four). Marin County also has two colleges: the College of Marin and Dominican University.

Thirteen Marin County schools are located within ½ mile of the proposed project corridor. Of these, the following two schools are located within 500 feet of the proposed project: North Bay Christian Academy in Novato and Dominican University in San Rafael.

² NFPA 130: Standard for Fixed Guideway Transit and Passenger Rail Systems, available: <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=130&cookie%5Ftest=1>.

Hospitals

The following lists hospitals that are located within Sonoma and Marin counties that would be available to assist in the event of an emergency associated with the proposed project.

Sonoma County

Healdsburg District Hospital
1375 University Avenue
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital
1165 Montgomery Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Kaiser Santa Rosa
401 Bicentennial Way
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Sonoma Valley Hospital
347 Andrieux Street
Sonoma, CA 95476

Palm Drive Hospital
501 Petaluma Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Sutter Medical Center
3325 Chanate Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Petaluma Valley Hospital
400 N. McDowell Blvd.
Petaluma, CA 94952

Sutter Warrack Hospital
2449 Summerfield Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Redwood Coast Medical Services
P.O. Box 1100
Gualala, CA 95455

Marin County

Marin General Hospital (MGH)
250 Bon Air Road
Greenbrae, CA 94904

Kaiser Hospital San Rafael (KSR)
99 Monticello Road
San Rafael, CA 94903

Novato Community Hospital (NCH)
180 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945

Fire and Emergency Services

There are local fire stations throughout the proposed project corridor that provide fire and emergency services within Sonoma and Marin counties (see Table 3.12-1). These facilities would respond to emergency calls on the proposed project.

In Sonoma County, the Fire Services Division of the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services coordinates fire service activities in the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County (County Service Area #40), advises the Board on fire service issues, assists with disaster program planning and emergency response planning, responds to emergency situations, and reviews program and policy matters with the Board of Supervisors. In addition, the Division administers contracts for fire prevention, code

enforcement and plan review with local fire districts. The Division responds to emergency incidents in its assigned area, along with local fire agencies and the California Department of Forestry (CDF). In addition, CDF responds to State responsibility wildland areas within the county (County of Sonoma, Department of Emergency Services, 2004).

In Marin County there are 16 fire protection districts, including the Marin County Fire Department, which provides fire suppression in most of unincorporated Marin County. In addition, most of the fire protection districts have mutual aid agreements, allowing districts to receive mutual assistance in times of special need.

**TABLE 3.12-1
FIRE STATIONS WITHIN ONE MILE OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT CORRIDOR**

Fire Department	Location	Within ½ mile of proposed project	Within one mile of proposed project
Cloverdale Fire Protection District	116 Broad Street, Cloverdale	Yes	
City of Healdsburg Fire Department	601 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg	Yes	
Fire Station 1 Windsor Fire Protection District	8200 Old Redwood Highway, Windsor (Headquarters)	Yes	
Fire Station 2 Windsor Fire Protection District	444 Windsor River Road, Windsor (unstaffed)	Yes	
Fire Station 1 Santa Rosa Fire Department	955 Sonoma Avenue, Santa Rosa (Headquarters)		Yes
Fire Station 3 Santa Rosa Fire Department	3311 Coffey Lane, Santa Rosa		Yes
Fire Station 1 Rohnert Park Fire Services Division	500 City Hall Drive, Rohnert Park (on-call Headquarters station that is not staffed full-time)	Yes	
Fire Station 3 Rohnert Park Fire Services Division	435 Southwest Boulevard, Rohnert Park (on-call unstaffed station that responds with off-duty personnel and members of the Volunteer contingent)	Yes	
Fire Station 1 Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District	1 East Cotati Avenue, Cotati	Yes	
Fire Station 2 City of Petaluma Fire Department	1001 N. Mc Dowell Boulevard, Petaluma	Yes	
Fire Station 3 City of Petaluma Fire Department	831 S. McDowell Boulevard, Petaluma	Yes	

Fire Department	Location	Within ½ mile of proposed project	Within one mile of proposed project
Fire Station 1 and Administrative Offices Novato Fire Protection District	7025 Redwood Boulevard, Novato	Yes	
Fire Station 4 Novato Fire Protection District	319 Enfrente Drive, Novato	Yes	
Fire Station 5 Novato Fire Protection District	5 Bolling Drive, Novato	Yes	
Fire Station 1 City of San Rafael Fire Department	1039 C Street (between 4th and 5th), San Rafael	Yes	
Fire Station 2 City of San Rafael Fire Department	210 Third Street, San Rafael	Yes	
Fire Station 4 City of San Rafael Fire Department	46 Castro Street, San Rafael	Yes	
Fire Station 7 City of San Rafael Fire Department	3530 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael	Yes	
Fire Station 16 Larkspur Fire Protection District	15 Barry Way, Greenbrae	Yes	
Fire Station 15 Larkspur Fire Protection District	420 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur		No (within 1.5 miles)

Police

Sonoma and Marin counties both have county sheriff offices as well as local police departments in the cities along the proposed project corridor. Local police departments would respond to a call on the proposed project within their jurisdiction, and they would rely on mutual aid from other jurisdictions, in particular the Sheriff's Departments of Sonoma and Marin counties.

Sonoma County

The Sonoma County Sheriff's Department serves the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County, located throughout the 1,600 square miles of the county. It provides law enforcement, court security services and detention services within the county. The Sonoma County Sheriff's Department headquarters is located at 2796 Ventura Avenue in Santa Rosa, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor.

The City of Cloverdale Police Department provides police services for the local community, including patrol, investigations, records, and dispatch. It has a "take home" car program in which each officer is assigned a patrol car that is kept at the officer's residence when off-duty. This enables the officer to

quickly respond as back-up when the need arises. The Cloverdale Police Department is located at 112 Broad Street, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor.

The City of Healdsburg Police Department includes the following divisions: Investigations, Bike Patrol, School Community Policing Officer, Youth Services, Technical Services, Community Services, and Reserve Program. It is located at 238 Center Street, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor. The Department would rely on mutual aid from Sonoma County Sheriff's Department in the event of an emergency associated with the proposed project.³

The Town of Windsor has contracted with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services since 1993, beginning with a five-year contract. In 1998, the Town of Windsor voted to extend its contract with the County Sheriff's Department for ten years. By virtue of this contract the Windsor Police Department can call on all resources available to the Sheriff's Department at no additional cost. The Town of Windsor Police Department is located at 9291 Old Redwood Highway, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor.

The City of Santa Rosa Police Department provides police services in the local community including field services (neighborhood enforcement/patrol), special services (e.g., property crime), records, and dispatch. It is located at 965 Sonoma Avenue, within approximately one mile of the proposed project corridor.

The City of Rohnert Park Department of Public Safety provides integrated police and fire services for the local community. Its office is located at 500 City Hall Drive, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor.

The City of Cotati Police Department provides police services within the local community, including dispatch, patrol, traffic enforcement, investigation, and community crime prevention. It is located at 203 West Sierra Avenue, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor.

The City of Petaluma Police Department includes the following divisions: Investigations Unit, Street Crimes Unit, and Traffic Safety Unit. It is located at 969 Petaluma Boulevard, within approximately one mile of the proposed project corridor.

Marin County

The Marin County Sheriff's Office is responsible for crime prevention and law enforcement in unincorporated areas of Marin County. Other responsibilities of the Sheriff's Office include maintaining the county jail, operating a countywide communications division and operating a documentary services division consisting of records, warrants and civil units. The Sheriff's Office is located at 3501 Civic Center Drive #145 in San Rafael, within approximately ½ mile of the proposed project corridor.

The Twin Cities Police Authority provides police services for the communities of Corte Madera and Larkspur. The communities consolidated police services in 1980. The Larkspur Facility – Station One is located at 250 Doherty Drive in Larkspur, within approximately one mile of the proposed project corridor. It is maintained 24 hours a day with limited counter service between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. The Corte Madera Facility – Station Two is located at 342 Tamalpais Drive in Corte Madera, which is approximately two miles from the proposed Larkspur Station.

The City of Novato Police Department is organized into the following divisions: a Crime Prevention Bureau, Investigations Bureau, Patrol Bureau, Technical Services Bureau, and Traffic Section. It is located at 909 Machin Avenue in Novato, within approximately one mile of the proposed project corridor.

³ Phone conversation with Linda Haviland, City of Healdsburg Police Department, August 16, 2005.

The San Rafael Police Department is organized into the following divisions: criminal investigations, dispatch, patrol, personnel and training, records and property, and traffic enforcement. Patrol is the largest division and is tasked with implementing the department's Community Oriented Public Service (COPS) strategy, based on developing partnerships with the community it serves. The San Rafael Police Department is located at 1400 Fifth Avenue in San Rafael, within approximately one mile of the proposed project corridor.

Rail Safety

Commuter rail operations typically operate in densely populated urban and suburban settings. In spite of the relatively high traffic volumes within these areas, accidents involving commuter rail train collisions with motor vehicles are infrequent. The combined total number of grade crossing accidents for the four commuter railroads operating in California – Metrolink, Coaster, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE), and Caltrain – were 17 in 2002, 21 in 2003 and 15 in 2004 (see Table 3.12-2). The proposed SMART passenger rail service would have a similar operational profile to ACE (Stockton to San Jose) and Coaster (Oceanside to San Diego) in that these two services operate primarily during peak hours and operate in a mix of rural, suburban and urban environments.

The following tables present the three indicators that were used to measure rail safety: grade crossing accidents in California and the United States; accidents per million train miles; and fatalities for passenger rail compared to auto/truck in the United States.

**TABLE 3.12-2
GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENTS IN CALIFORNIA AND THE UNITED STATES**

Commuter Railroad	California			United States		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
Metrolink	16	16	10			
Coaster	0	0	0			
ACE	0	0	2			
Caltrain	1	5	3			
Total	17	21	15			
Grade Crossing accidents for all 17 U.S. Commuter Rail Operations in the U.S.				62	59	71
Grade Crossing accidents for all freight services in the U.S.	91	82	94	2808	2683	2732

Source: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), 2005.

- Notes:
1. Grade crossing accidents refer to commuter rail train collisions with motor vehicles.
 2. According to the FRA, commuter rail passenger transportation means short-haul rail passenger transportation in metropolitan and suburban areas usually having reduced fare, multiple-ride and commuter tickets and morning and evening peak period operations.

Table 3.12-3 illustrates the ratio between train miles and grade crossing accidents. It compares California commuter railroad accidents per million train miles (MTM) to other commuter agencies and freight railroads nationally. It is important to note that the ratio of train to motor vehicle collisions for commuter railroads is considerably less than for freight railroads. As noted in Table 3.12-3 the accident rate for 17 U.S. commuter rail operations in 2003 was less than one accident (0.03) per MTM compared with approximately 3.6 accidents per MTM for freight rail. The accident rate for California commuter rail operations ranged from zero to 1.90 accidents per MTM in 2003.

**TABLE 3.12-3
ACCIDENTS PER MILLION TRAIN MILES (MTM)**

	Train Miles	Accident Rate
	2003	2003
Coaster	1,324,460	0.0
Caltrain	4,862,411	1.03
ACE	747,343	0.0
Metrolink	8,424,078	1.90
17 U.S. Commuter Operations in U.S.	264,585,439	0.03
Freight		3.61

Source: Federal Transit Administration, 2005.

Note: 2004 train mile data is unavailable.

In terms of fatalities, there were 90 passenger rail fatalities in the U.S. in 2003 compared to almost 43,000 auto/truck related fatalities. Of the 90 passenger rail fatalities, 68 (or 75 percent) were a result of illegal trespassing, not a result of rail safety operations. As noted in Table 3.12-4, the total number of passenger rail fatalities per million passenger miles (MPM) is less than one.

**TABLE 3.12-4
UNITED STATES FATALITIES: PASSENGER RAIL VS VEHICLES (AUTO/TRUCK), 2003**

Passenger Rail Fatalities (people on train)	1	Passenger Rail Fatalities Per MPM	0.00
Grade Crossing Fatalities	21	Grade Crossing Fatalities Per MPM	0.002
Trespasser Fatalities	68	Trespasser Fatalities Per MPM	0.007
Total Passenger Rail Fatalities	90	Total Passenger Rail Fatalities Per MPM	0.01
Vehicle Occupant Fatalities	36,440	Vehicle Occupant Fatalities Per MPM	0.008
Non-motorist Fatalities (Car-Pedestrian and Car-Bicycle collisions)	5,756	Non-motorist Fatalities Per MPM	0.001
Total Vehicle Fatalities	42,196	Total Vehicle Fatalities Per MPM	0.01

Sources: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov>, http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/STSI/State_Info.cfm?Year=2003&State=CA&Accessible=0 and <http://www.nhtsa.com/people/Crash/crashstatistics/index.htm>; Bureau of Transportation Statistics: http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/2004/html/table_01_37.html; and <http://safetydata.fra.dot.gov/OfficeofSafety/>.

The total passenger miles for vehicles (auto/truck) were over 4.7 trillion in 2003, while the total passenger miles for passenger rail were over 9.3 billion. As a result, fatality rates per MPM do not differ substantially.

3.12.3 Significance Criteria

Project-related effects on public facilities and safety were considered significant when these impacts would result in the following conditions:

- Substantial increases in emergency response times;
- The need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:
 - fire protection and emergency response
 - police protection
 - schools;
- Creation of a hazardous condition (e.g. pedestrian/train conflicts), with regard to safety of the public and schools; or
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

3.12.4 Impact Assessment Methodology

Public facilities, such as schools and emergency services (including hospitals, fire and police) were identified throughout the two counties using MapPoint, a Microsoft mapping and location services software, Yahoo maps and a review of public websites. Schools were identified within a ½ mile of the proposed project corridor, while emergency service providers were identified within one mile of the corridor. Hospitals, however, were identified on a countywide basis.

Impacts on public facilities within the proposed project area were assessed based on the significance criteria outlined in Section 3.12.3. Local emergency service providers in Sonoma and Marin counties were contacted to assess both their ability to respond to incidents in the community, as well as to an incident related to the proposed project. The assessment examined whether fire protection, emergency response, police protection, and schools would be able to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or performance objectives with implementation of the proposed project.

3.12.5 Impact Summary

There is the potential for temporary delays in response times of fire and police vehicles due to increased traffic congestion and/or road closure during construction activities on at-grade crossings. Emergency vehicles may need to alter their routes in order to avoid those areas where construction is occurring along the rail corridor. This also applies to travel to and from schools. There is the potential for delays in getting to school and the possible need to temporarily alter routes during the construction period.

In terms of long-term operational impacts, emergency vehicles would experience delays at train crossings when the gates are down. On average, emergency response travel delays resulting from the proposed project are expected to be minimal, about 40 seconds, depending on traffic demands and location.

Implementation of passenger rail service may result in an increased demand for emergency response services from the local providers. Should there be an incident involving the train, local emergency service providers would need to respond. However, in spite of the relatively high traffic volumes within the more densely populated urban and suburban settings in which the proposed project would operate, based on the safety records of other commuter railroads in the state and country, accidents are very infrequent and therefore the impact on emergency service providers and hospitals would be less than significant.

Implementation of the proposed project would not affect the ability of the school districts to adequately provide educational services to residents in the proposed project corridor. Because the proposed project does not include a residential component, there would be no additional children in the school districts in either Sonoma or Marin counties. As a result, no new facilities would be necessary to serve the proposed project, and no adverse environmental impacts from facility construction and operation would occur.

Although the proposed project could create a hazardous condition with regard to the safety of the public and schools, implementation of proposed programs and safety measures would ensure that this impact is less than significant. Security for the rail operations would be the responsibility of SMART, either through in-house services or contracted security services.

The railroad corridor is not expected to impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Potential impacts from the construction or operation of the proposed project would be less than significant due to SMART's implementation of the Emergency Preparedness Plan required by the FRA. SMART would coordinate with local jurisdictions to ensure compliance with all applicable emergency response plans in Sonoma and Marin counties.

Implementation of the proposed project, in conjunction with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects listed in Section 3.1, would not result in significant cumulative impacts on public facilities or safety.

Impacts on public facilities as a result of air emissions, noise and vibration and visual changes are described in their respective sections of this environmental document.

3.12.6 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Construction-Related Impacts

Impact PFS-1: Project construction activities could cause emergency response delays. (*Less than significant*)

During the construction period for the proposed project, there is the potential for delays in response times of fire and police vehicles due to increased traffic congestion or road closure/detour as work is being done on at-grade crossings and at proposed stations. Emergency vehicles may need to alter their routes in order to avoid those areas where construction is occurring along the rail corridor.

This type of delay would occur for a very short time period. The number of delays would vary depending on location, type of improvement and surrounding conditions such as traffic demands, access and pedestrian activity. SMART would notify local emergency service providers of construction activities and road closures and would coordinate with local providers to establish alternative routes and appropriate signage.

Long-Term Impacts

Impact PFS-2: Response times may increase for emergency vehicles approaching at-grade crossings when a passenger rail train is present. (*Less than significant*)

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this document, the proposed project would provide a total of 13 daily passenger rail round trips between the following cities: four daily round trips between Cloverdale and Larkspur, two daily round trips between Healdsburg and Larkspur, three daily round trips between Windsor and Larkspur, two daily round trips between Petaluma and Larkspur, and two daily round trips between Healdsburg and Petaluma. Service generally would be operational only on weekdays, with the possibility of weekend service.

Paramedic, fire and police service providers may experience delays approaching at-grade crossings when a passenger rail train is present and the gates are down. Safe operating procedures require emergency responders to stop at at-grade crossings when the gates are in the down position and to wait for trains to clear the crossing before proceeding. This may result in travel delays on average of about 40 seconds.

Train operators may further minimize emergency vehicle delays by remaining stopped at station platforms when emergency vehicles are in the area, slowing down or stopping to permit emergency vehicles to pass the train, or by proceeding as quickly as possible through the crossing. Additionally, if conditions allow, emergency vehicles could attempt a “queue jump” maneuver that would allow them to move to the front of the vehicle queue and immediately leave when the gates are raised. In the event that a grade crossing is blocked due to a train-related incident, emergency aid may be required from an adjoining fire or police station or from a neighboring jurisdiction, until the crossing is clear. However, given the infrequency of grade crossing collisions, the potential for this type of impact on emergency service providers is very low. Overall, the potential impact on emergency response times is considered less than significant.⁴

Impact PFS-3: The proposed project would increase demand for emergency response services from local providers. (Less than significant)

An emergency incident along or in the proposed project corridor would require dispatching emergency services – police, fire and/or emergency medical services – to the scene. Emergency services would be dispatched from the nearest station within the jurisdictional boundary of the incident. To assure effective and timely response to a passenger railroad related incident, close coordination would be required between SMART and local emergency services.

Prior to the start of passenger rail services, SMART is required to prepare an Emergency Preparedness Plan, subject to approval by the FRA. An emergency response working group comprised of SMART personnel and all emergency response agencies that may be affected by passenger railroad operations would be established. The purpose of the working group would be to review the Emergency Preparedness Plan and evaluate protocols for emergency response. The plan would include emergency response related to railroad equipment, railroad right-of-way and other aspects unique to railroad infrastructure and operations. Response times and responder responsibilities related to the Puerto Suello and Cal Park Tunnels would be a key part of the emergency plans. See Section 2.9 (Environmental Compliance Measures) for details regarding the Emergency Preparedness Plan.

As described in Section 3.12.2 (Environmental Setting), commuter rail accidents are very infrequent. Accordingly, with implementation of the required Emergency Preparedness Plan, the impact on emergency service providers would be less than significant.

Impact PFS-4: The proposed project could result in the creation of a hazardous condition (e.g. pedestrian/train conflicts), with regard to safety of the public and schools. (Less than significant)

There are 44 schools within ½ mile of the proposed project corridor, including five schools within 500 feet. The proximity of these schools to the rail right-of-way presents the potential for rail-related accidents involving school children. In order to educate the community, and school children in particular, about safety issues around the rail tracks SMART plans to work with Operation Lifesaver.⁵ Operation Lifesaver is a nationwide, non-profit information safety program dedicated to educating the public on how to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities at at-grade rail crossings and on railroad rights-of-way. This free public service works to create awareness of the hazards that may occur on railroad property, and at at-grade crossings in particular, and there is a program specifically for children. SMART proposes to sponsor in-school education in advance of start-up of the project. In addition, passenger rail is highly

⁴ Please see Section 3.6 of this DEIR for a detailed operational analysis of local street networks.

⁵ Operation Lifesaver, available: <http://www.oli.org/>.

regulated by both federal and state agencies with respect to safety. Standard safety measures would be employed including fencing, other physical safety structures, signage, and other physical impediments designed to promote safety and minimize pedestrian/train accidents. These measures are listed in Chapter 2, Project Description, Section 2.9 (Environmental Compliance Measures).

System security would be an important component of rail operations and would be the responsibility of SMART. SMART could have either in-house security or contract for it. Contracted services could include local police, county sheriff's personnel or private security personnel. Fare inspectors would also be part of system security and serve as additional surveillance to deter crime.

Although the proposed project could result in passenger rail-related accidents and fatalities, the accident rate for the proposed project is expected to be similar to state and national data, with accidents with motor vehicles ranging from zero to 1.9 accidents per million train miles and fatalities less than one annually per million passenger miles. With the implementation of the programs and safety measures described above, the impact of the proposed project on public safety would be less than significant.

Cumulative Impacts

Implementation of the proposed project, in conjunction with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable projects listed in Section 3.1, would not result in significant cumulative impacts on public facilities or safety.

Other identified cumulative projects are not expected to result in a significant impact on emergency response times. The potential delays associated with the proposed project would be due to construction around the proposed stations and at at-grade crossings and to the presence of trains at at-grade crossings when emergency vehicles need to cross. To the extent any road closures or detours required for construction of the cumulative projects would occur at the same time as the proposed project's construction, the proposed project's contribution to any combined delays would be less than significant due to SMART's coordination with local emergency providers to establish alternative routes and appropriate signage. The potential impact of the proposed project on increased delays of emergency response vehicles at at-grade crossings due to the presence of trains is unique to the rail project and would not combine with other cumulative development projects to create a significant cumulative impact. The operation of freight trains in the corridor could contribute to increased delays at at-grade crossings if freight trains are present when emergency vehicles need to cross. However, since freight service would operate primarily during off-peak hours while the proposed project would operate during peak hours, the operation of the two rail services would not likely combine to create a significant cumulative impact at at-grade crossings.

With regard to the potential impact on demand for emergency response services from local providers, the cumulative development projects would increase the number of residential units and commercial enterprises within the study area. This increase would result in a cumulative demand on public facilities including schools, hospitals, fire protection, emergency services, and police services. However, for the most part, these projects would be approved by the local jurisdictions and developed within the guidelines of local general plans. Therefore, local jurisdictions would be expected to increase their services to serve the approved development. In addition, the Emergency Preparedness Plan required to be developed for the proposed project in consultation with local emergency providers would ensure that the proposed project's contribution to the cumulative demand on emergency response services is less than significant.

Impacts from proposed freight operations could combine with impacts of the proposed project on public safety to create a cumulative impact. However, freight service would operate primarily in the off-peak hours in the project corridor north of Highway 37 only, whereas the proposed passenger rail service would operate during peak hours. This would reduce the likelihood of an accident involving both passenger and freight vehicles. Furthermore, SMART's implementation of the community education program, Operation Lifesaver, would serve to reduce the likelihood of accidents at at-grade crossings for both types of rail service. Considering the very low accident rate associated with passenger rail service, the proposed project's contribution to a cumulative public safety impact would be less than significant.